

The Government of Colombia, with the assistance of the United States, is continuing its efforts to further reduce the level of violence in Colombia and to ensure that those responsible for violence are quickly brought to justice. To speed prosecutions of those responsible for violent crimes, the Prosecutor General's Office plans to hire this year 72 new prosecutors and more than 110 investigators into the Human Rights Unit. These additions are part of the increase of more than 2,100 staff that will be added to the Prosecutor General's Office in 2008 and 2009. To support these additional personnel and their activities, Colombia has steadily increased the budget for the Prosecutor General's Office, including by more than \$40 million this year, bringing the total outlay for that office to nearly \$600 million.

In negotiating this Agreement, my Administration was guided by the objectives set out by the Congress in the Trade Act of 2002. My Administration has complied fully with the letter and spirit of Trade Promotion Authority—from preparation for the negotiations, to consultations with the Congress throughout the talks, to the content of the Agreement itself. In addition, my Administration has conducted several hundred further consultations, led congressional trips to Colombia, and last year renegotiated key labor, environmental, investment, and intellectual property rights provisions in the Agreement at the behest of the Congress. By providing for the effective enforcement of labor and environmental laws, combined with strong remedies for noncompliance, the Agreement will contribute to improved worker rights and higher levels of environmental protection in Colombia. The result is an Agreement that all of us can be proud of and that will create significant new opportunities for American workers, farmers, ranchers, businesses, and consumers by opening the Colombian market and eliminating barriers to U.S. goods, services, and investment.

Under the Agreement, tariffs on over 80 percent of U.S. industrial and consumer goods exported to Colombia will be eliminated immediately, with tariffs on the remaining goods eliminated within 10 years. The Agreement will allow 52 percent of U.S. agricultural exports, by value, to enter Colombia duty-free immediately, with the remaining agricultural tariffs phased out over time. This will help to level the playing field, as 91 percent of U.S. imports from Colombia already enjoy duty-free access to our market under U.S. trade preference programs.

My Administration looks forward to continuing to work with the Congress on a bipartisan path forward to secure approval of this legislation that builds on the positive spirit of the May 10, 2007, agreement on trade between the Administration and the House and Senate leadership, and the strong bipartisan support demonstrated by both Houses of Congress in overwhelmingly

approving the United States-Peru Trade Promotion Agreement last year. The United States-Colombia Trade Promotion Agreement represents an historic step forward in U.S. relations with a key friend and ally in Latin America. Congressional approval of legislation to implement the Agreement is in our national interest, and I urge the Congress to act favorably on this legislation as quickly as possible.

GEORGE W. BUSH.
THE WHITE HOUSE, April 7, 2008.

EXECUTIVE AND OTHER COMMUNICATIONS

The following communications were laid before the Senate, together with accompanying papers, reports, and documents, and were referred as indicated:

EC-5681. A communication from the Congressional Review Coordinator, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, Department of Agriculture, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Karnal Bunt; Removal of Regulated Areas in Texas" (Docket No. APHIS-2007-0157) received on April 7, 2008; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC-5682. A communication from the Under Secretary of Defense (Acquisition, Technology and Logistics), transmitting, pursuant to law, the Selected Acquisition Reports for the quarter ending December 31, 2007; to the Committee on Armed Services.

EC-5683. A communication from the Chairman, Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to the Buy American Act; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC-5684. A communication from the Chief of Regulations and Administrative Law, U.S. Coast Guard, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Drawbridge Operations Regulations (including 6 regulations beginning with USCG-2007-0070)" (RIN1625-AA09) received on April 7, 2008; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-5685. A communication from the Chief of Regulations and Administrative Law, U.S. Coast Guard, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Drawbridge Operations Regulations (including 4 regulations beginning with USCG-2008-0151)" (RIN1625-AA09) received on April 7, 2008; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-5686. A communication from the Chief of Regulations and Administrative Law, U.S. Coast Guard, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Security Zone; Waters Surrounding U.S. Forces Vessel SBX-1, HI" (RIN1625-AA87) received on April 7, 2008; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-5687. A communication from the Chief of Regulations and Administrative Law, U.S. Coast Guard, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Security Zone; Manbirtee Key, Port of Manatee, FL" (RIN1625-AA87) received on April 7, 2008; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-5688. A communication from the Chief of Regulations and Administrative Law, U.S. Coast Guard, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Drawbridge Oper-

ations Regulations: Atlantic Intracoastal Waterway (AIWW), Sunset Beach, NC" (RIN1625-AA09) received on April 7, 2008; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-5689. A communication from the Chief of Regulations and Administrative Law, U.S. Coast Guard, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Drawbridge Operations Regulations (including 5 regulations beginning with USCG-2008-0046)" (RIN1625-AA09) received on April 7, 2008; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-5690. A communication from the Chief of Regulations and Administrative Law, U.S. Coast Guard, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Security Zone Regulations (including 4 regulations beginning with USCG-2008-0080)" (RIN1625-AA00) received on April 7, 2008; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-5691. A communication from the Chief of Regulations and Administrative Law, U.S. Coast Guard, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Security Zone; Cape Fear River, Wilmington, North Carolina" (RIN1625-AA87) received on April 7, 2008; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-5692. A communication from the Attorney Advisor, U.S. Coast Guard, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "2008 Rates for Pilotage on the Great Lakes" (RIN1625-AB23) received on April 7, 2008; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-5693. A communication from the Chief of Regulations and Administrative Law, U.S. Coast Guard, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Anchorage Regulations Yarmouth, Maine, Casco Bay" (RIN1625-AA01) received on April 7, 2008; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-5694. A communication from the Attorney Advisor, U.S. Coast Guard, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Sector Anchorage Western Alaska Marine Inspection and Captain of the Port Zones; Technical Amendment" (RIN1625-ZA15) received on April 7, 2008; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-5695. A communication from the Chief of Regulations and Administrative Law, U.S. Coast Guard, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Regulated Navigation Area Regulations (including 2 regulations beginning with USCG-2008-0045)" (RIN1625-AA11) received on April 7, 2008; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-5696. A communication from the Attorney, U.S. Coast Guard, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Landowner Defenses to Liability Under the Oil Pollution Act of 1990: Standards and Practices for Conducting All Appropriate Inquiries" (RIN1625-AB09) received on April 7, 2008; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-5697. A communication from the Chief of Regulations and Administrative Law, U.S. Coast Guard, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Special Local Regulations (including 2 regulations beginning with USCG-2007-0076)" (RIN1625-AA08) received on April 7, 2008; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-5698. A communication from the Vice President, Government Affairs and Corporate Communications, National Railroad Passenger Corporation, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to the Corporation's Grant and Legislative Request for fiscal year 2009; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-5699. A communication from the Secretary of Health and Human Services, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report entitled "Health, United States, 2007"; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC-5700. A communication from the Chief of the Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "2007 Section 45K Inflation Adjustment Factor" (Notice 2008-44) received on April 1, 2008; to the Committee on Finance.

EC-5701. A communication from the Chief of the Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Standards for Recognition of Tax-Exempt Status" ((RIN1545-BE37)(TD 9390)) received on April 1, 2008; to the Committee on Finance.

EC-5702. A communication from the Chief of the Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Guidance Under Section 7623 (Whistleblower Regulations)" ((RIN1545-BG74)(TD 9389)) received on April 1, 2008; to the Committee on Finance.

EC-5703. A communication from the Chief of the Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Announcement and Report Concerning Advance Pricing Agreements" (Announcement 2008-27) received on April 1, 2008; to the Committee on Finance.

EC-5704. A communication from the Chairman, Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report on D.C. Act 17-328, "Special Election Amendment Act of 2008" received on April 2, 2008; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-5705. A communication from the Chairman, Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report on D.C. Act 17-327, "Producer Licensing Amendment Act of 2008" received on April 2, 2008; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-5706. A communication from the Chairman, Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report on D.C. Act 17-323, "Clean Cars Act of 2008" received on April 2, 2008; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-5707. A communication from the Chairman, Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report on D.C. Act 17-331, "Fire Hydrant Inspection, Repair, and Maintenance Amendment Act of 2008" received on April 2, 2008; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-5708. A communication from the Chairman, Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report on D.C. Act 17-337, "Local Rent Supplement Program Temporary Amendment Act of 2008" received on April 2, 2008; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-5709. A communication from the Chairman, Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report on D.C. Act 17-336, "Supplemental Appropriations Clarification Temporary Amendment

Act of 2008" received on April 2, 2008; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-5710. A communication from the Chairman, Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report on D.C. Act 17-335, "Conversion Fee Clarification Temporary Amendment Act of 2008" received on April 2, 2008; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-5711. A communication from the Chairman, Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report on D.C. Act 17-334, "Inclusionary Zoning Implementation Temporary Amendment Act of 2008" received on April 2, 2008; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-5712. A communication from the Chairman, Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report on D.C. Act 17-333, "Extension of Time to Dispose of the Old Congress Heights School Temporary Amendment Act of 2008" received on April 2, 2008; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-5713. A communication from the Chairman, Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report on D.C. Act 17-332, "Department of Transportation Establishment Temporary Amendment Act of 2008" received on April 2, 2008; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-5714. A communication from the Chairman, Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report on D.C. Act 17-330, "Fire-Standard-Compliant Cigarettes Act of 2008" received on April 2, 2008; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-5715. A communication from the Chairman, Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report on D.C. Act 17-324, "Accrued Sick and Safe Leave Act of 2008" received on April 2, 2008; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-5716. A communication from the Chairman, Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report on D.C. Act 17-325, "College Savings Program Increased Tax Benefit Act of 2008" received on April 2, 2008; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-5717. A communication from the Chairman, Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report on D.C. Act 17-326, "Omnibus Executive Service System, Policy and Fire Systems, and Retirement Modifications for Chief of Police Cathy L. Lanier and Fire Chief Dennis L. Rubin Amendment Act of 2008" received on April 2, 2008; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

PETITIONS AND MEMORIALS

The following petitions and memorials were laid before the Senate and were referred or ordered to lie on the table as indicated

POM-295. A resolution adopted by the Board of County Commissioners of Miami-Dade County of the State of Florida urging the Florida Legislature to strengthen mortgage fraud laws; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

POM-296. A resolution adopted by the Board of County Commissioners of Miami-Dade County of the State of Florida urging the Florida Legislature to include venture capital firms that are developing alternative and renewable energy sources in the Florida Opportunity Fund; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

POM-297. A resolution adopted by the Board of Commissioners of Ferry County of the State of Washington relative to federal lands in the County; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

POM-298. A resolution adopted by the Board of County Commissioners of Miami-Dade County of the State of Florida urging the Florida Legislature to designate a portion of State Road 934 as "Rev. Dr. CP. Preston, Jr. Street"; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

POM-299. A petition from a nongovernmental entity relative to Iranian Kurdish refugees currently residing in a camp between the Jordan and Iraq border; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

POM-300. A resolution transmitted by a private citizen relative to the Uintah Treaty; to the Committee on Indian Affairs.

POM-301. A resolution adopted by the House of Representatives of the State of Michigan urging Congress to enact legislation to change the computation of the State Federal Medical Assistance Percentage; to the Committee on Finance.

HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 243

Whereas, the Federal Medicaid Assistance Percentage (FMAP) determines the distribution of federal matching funds for medical assistance programs, including Medicaid. The United States Department of Health and Human Services calculates the FMAP annually for each state. The formula for calculating the FMAP is determined by a state's per capita income as calculated by the United States Department of Commerce. In 2003, the state lost about \$160 million in federal Medicaid funds when General Motors made a one-time \$16 billion payment to its underfunded pension plan. This one-time payment was included and skewed the calculation of the state's per capita income; and

Whereas, recent contract negotiations between three domestic automakers and the UAW will generate large one-time payments beginning in 2010 to a Volunteer Employee Benefits Association (VEBA) trust fund to be administered by the union. These payments will be similar in character to the payment made by General Motors for underfunded pension liabilities that skewed the FMAP calculation of state per capita income in 2003; and

Whereas, State and local governments are encouraged to prefund their retiree health benefits as a result of the Governmental Accounting Standards Board (GASB) 45 reporting requirement. These payments will be similar in character to the General Motors one-time payment for underfunded pension liabilities that skewed the FMAP calculation of state per capita income; and

Whereas, the combined contributions of the automobile companies will result in over \$60 billion that will overstate the state's personal income by billions of dollars. The prefunding of public employee retirement by state and local governments will result in an exponential increase in this overstatement. This would place the state at risk of a decline in its FMAP for the three years that these contributions affect personal income calculations; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the House of Representatives, That we memorialize Congress to enact legislation to change the computing of state Federal Medical Assistance Percentage by disregarding employer contributions toward retiree health care in calculating Medicaid; and be it further

Resolved, That copies of this resolution be transmitted to the President of the United States Senate, the Speaker of the United States House of Representatives, and the members of the Michigan congressional delegation.